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Guardian East

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**Magrath implements
anthrax vaccinations**
page 3

**82nd Engineers keep
vigilant watch**
page 4

**Carabinieri foster trust
with local citizens**
page 6

**Italian Lagunari excel
during Rapid Guardian**
Page 10

**201st Logistics Task Force
rises to occasion**
page 12

Remote OPs close
page 14

Valentine greetings!
page 18

BEHIND THE LINES

Tough Book backbone of intel

By 1st Lt. John Nakata, G2 Battle Captain

With the high level of techno-gadgetry present in any task force or brigade tactical operations center (TOC), it's no surprise that the intelligence community of Multi-National Brigade (East) also possesses its very own computer system.

It's called the All Source Analysis System-Light (ASAS-L) and its small, unassuming shape forms the backbone of our intelligence architecture throughout the brigade.

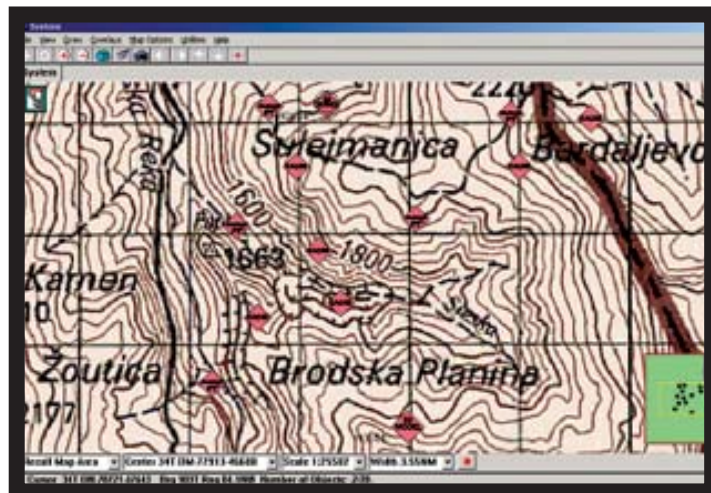
Originally designed to operate at the task force level and interface between other intelligence systems at brigade and division, the Panasonic "Tough Book" laptop contains a powerful suite of tools that is designed to help our intelligence analysts store, analyze, visualize, and disseminate timely intelligence to units throughout the sector.

MNB(E) is also in a unique position as many of the software tools present on our systems were specifically designed to work during Stability and Support Operations (SASO). It is for this reason that operators will often refer to the system as the "SASO Tool Set."

The key to the ASAS-L is the database containing thousands of records of individuals, events, and organizations drawn from USAREUR intelligence databases in central region and local unit records. This core of information can then be displayed in a variety of formats to help units and analysts maintain a timely, accurate intelligence picture.

"I like how you can plot to the map," said Pfc. Kara Koenig, an intelligence analyst working in G2 operations. "I actually prefer drawing symbols on a regular map. But choosing things from the database and automatically having them plot to the digital map is a great improvement over difficulties I've had in the past working with other mapping programs."

Our ASAS-L is an additional step forward for the intelligence community that supports the war-fighting advances of the entire Army Battlefield Command System (ABCS).



Unclassified example data showing events selected from the database and plotted to a map.

Though we haven't yet reached full integration with the maneuver system or those of other branches, it won't be long before a commander can seamlessly transition to a common operating picture that incorporates both friendly forces and their threat through the full spectrum of operations. ASAS is the intelligence community's significant contribution to this common operating picture and, in many ways, is a view toward the future.

As with the fielding of any new system, the MNB(E) intelligence community still faces several challenges to fully integrating the system. First, using a system as complicated as the ASAS-L requires a skill-set that is easily perishable if not properly maintained. For this reason, soldiers must be encouraged to use the system every day and experiment with its features to maintain proficiency with the variety of tools available. Also, due to the SASO Tool Set's complexity and numerous features, certain aspects of the program are not as user friendly or intuitive to many of our operators. Staff Sgt. Robert Gummer, a veteran of 4th Infantry Division and their efforts to digitize

Tough Book continued on page 23

On the cover: Photo by Spc. Matthew Lang
Soldiers of 201st Logistics Task Force rush a "casualty" from a Black Hawk during a recent MEDEVAC exercise.

SEE THE PHOTO OF THE DAY
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Guardian East

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Capt. David Matzel

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS LIAISON OFFICER
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DETACHMENT SERGEANT
1st Sgt. Thomas Hayes
CAMP MONTEITH TEAM NCOIC
Master Sgt. John Barr

LAYOUT EDITOR AND WEBMASTER
Sgt. Erin Elliott
PRINT JOURNALISTS
Spc. Christopher Gookin
Spc. Matthew Lang
Spc. Whitney Hughes

EXECUTIVE OFFICER, 114TH MPAD
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Anthrax vaccination implemented at Magrath

Story and photo by Spc Christopher Gookin

CAMP MAGRATH, Kosovo—Soldiers walked into the aid station in twos and threes on a late January day. Some approached confidently. Others approached warily. They were all there for the same reason – to start or continue with their anthrax shots.

“I’ve had the shots before,” said Sgt Anthony Jarman, an Avenger team chief with Delta Battery, 4-3 Air Defense Artillery Battalion. “It burned the last time.”

The Anthrax Vaccination Program is a series of six injections of antibiotics currently being offered to U.S. military personnel at aid stations in Multi-National Brigade (East).

The Department of Defense started the program in March 1998. The antibiotics are effective when started immediately after exposure, but as exposures cannot be predicted, the DOD will vaccinate ahead of time. For this reason the anthrax vaccine is considered to be a Force Health Protection issue.

There are three forms of anthrax: inhalation, cutaneous, and gastrointestinal.

“The form of anthrax that most concerns the military is inhalation anthrax,” said Capt. Michael Davidson, a physician’s assistant with 2-63 Armor Battalion. “That’s why we’re vaccinating.”

The first injection is administered on the initial visit. The second and third injections are spaced at two-week intervals. The remaining injections are delivered at six, twelve, and eighteen months. Additionally, there is an annual booster for the vaccine.

“The intervals are in place to allow the body to develop the proper immunity,” said Davidson. The Department of Defense maintains a centralized database in Washington, D.C. called the Medical Protection System. The MEDPRO System stores each soldier’s individual shot record.

Each aid station also has an internal database that provides a record, which alerts the medical staff for individuals who are due for the next vaccination or booster, added Davidson.

“Between 2000 and 2002 there was a limited supply of the vaccine, now there is enough and more in production,” said Davidson. “We keep plenty of antibiotics on hand too. Combined with the vaccinations, that is two-fold protection against exposure to anthrax.”

The order to receive the anthrax vaccination is considered lawful as defined by Army Regulation 600-20, said Capt. Karin Mallari, deputy command judge advocate for MNB (E). Service members who refuse to receive the shots are subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, specifically Article 92.

Following the Gulf War in 1991, an initial inspection by the United Nations Special Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction revealed that Iraq had weapons loaded with anthrax. Additionally, following the tragedies of Sept. 11, 2001, evidence surfaced that Al Qaeda had attempted to develop anthrax.



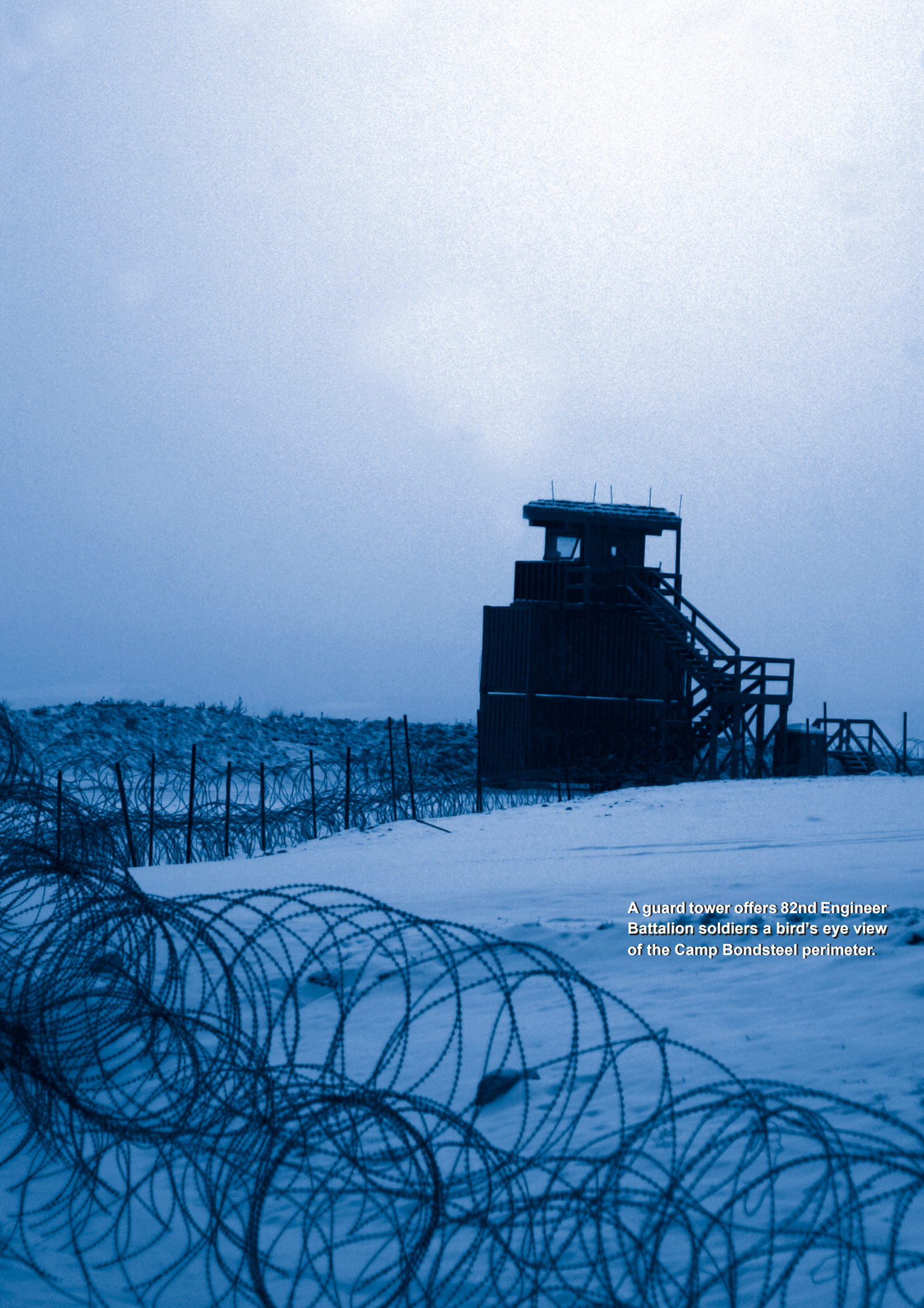
Spc. Carlos Espinoza, a medic with 4-3 Air Defense Artillery, administers an anthrax shot to Sgt. 1st Class Mark Beckett of Delta Battery, 4-3 ADA at Camp Magrath, Jan 6.

According to U.S. intelligence sources, anthrax is a top choice as a biological warfare agent. It is easy to produce, spreads easily in the air, and remains in the soil for decades. With as few as 5,000 to 6,000 spores inhaled in a single breath, an individual can become infected. Anthrax spores are tasteless, odorless, and invisible.

Cutaneous anthrax stems from contaminated animal products such as meat, wool, or hides. Gastrointestinal anthrax is a rare form. There has not been a recorded case in the U.S. in the last century. It is caused by eating undercooked or contaminated meat. Twenty-five to 60 percent of cases are fatal.

Unit commanders are provided with an education kit that is comprised of a power point presentation, a trifold brochure and additional literature that includes a myths and facts sheet.

“With the education and information provided,” said Davidson. “I’ll take the vaccine.”



A guard tower offers 82nd Engineer Battalion soldiers a bird's eye view of the Camp Bondsteel perimeter.

82nd Engineers

keep vigilant watch



Story and photo by Spc. Whitney Hughes

You are sitting alone in a guard tower on the perimeter of Camp Bondsteel. You've been sitting for the past seven hours, staring at the same horizon dotted with red-roofed Kosovo houses. A bright light momentarily catches your eye and you see a figure photographing the fence line in your area of responsibility.

What do you do? Who do you call? What are your rules of engagement?

This is just one of the many situations the soldiers of the 82nd Engineer Battalion have to be prepared to deal with on a daily basis. Force protection is their mission and they guard the gates and perimeter 24 hours a day.

They make it safe for the rest of us on Camp Bondsteel to do our jobs.

"The biggest thing (for force protection) is situational awareness," said Capt. John Drake, assistant operations officer for the 82nd. "That goes back to everything."

The soldiers pull eight-hour shifts in the middle of the night or all day, said Pfc. Ronald Camp, a combat engineer with the 82nd.

They work the same shift at the same post for three week rotations, Camp said.

"Out here time goes by slow," said Camp, as he sat in a small guard shack in which he could move about a foot to the right or left. The only scenery is on a television screen that shows different locations on the perimeter and the view directly out of his window, which was at least picturesque.

Chow and the occasional phone call from another guard mount are the best ways to pass time, Camp said, and, of course, any incidents that happen.

"Occasionally we have to chase people off the wire (fence line)," said Sgt. Jeff Waggoner, a squad leader with the 82nd. "On Sundays we chase kids off the wire all day."

When the guard calls in such an incident the Quick Response Force responds to investigate the situation.

"We've had incidents of people probing the fence line and taking pictures," said Waggoner. If necessary, they are detained and brought to the Bondsteel Detention Facility. Some locals do it on purpose.

"We get people that are just hungry and cold looking for a warm bed and a hot meal," said Waggoner.

Animals help keep the guards on their toes as well. Traps are set along the fence line to catch stray dogs and

rabbits. There are some animals whose presence is more permanent than others.

The soldiers have a "pet" hawk they've named Jack. Jack lives and hunts between observation points seven and eight, said Waggoner.

"Jack even has a girlfriend," said Waggoner, who pointed out the female hawk perched on the concertina wire of the fence line.

The 82nd has carried out the 24-hour security mission with a considerably smaller force than the previous rotation.

"We only have two companies, which aren't fully manned," Waggoner said. "We didn't cut down on manpower, we just don't get many breaks."

Inside a humvee, Waggoner asked some of his soldiers how many days off they've had since they've been in country.

They confirmed the obvious.

"One," shouted one soldier.

"Three," responded another.

As for Waggoner, he is still waiting for his day off.

"But it's these guys that matter," Waggoner said, as he pointed over his shoulder.

Peacekeeper profile



Tamaro J. Green

Age: 27

Rank: Sgt.

MOS: Engineer

Unit: 82nd Eng. Bn.

Camp: Bondsteel

Hometown: Cortlandt Manor, N.Y.

What are you good at? Basketball, music.

Why did you join the Army? To be the best I can be.

What advice would you give to soldiers coming to

Kosovo? Bring snivel gear and drink water.



Appuntato (Corporal) Antonio Longo, an Italian Carabinieri, secures a roadside, Feb. 7.

Carabinieri foster trust with locals

Story and photos by Spc. Matthew Lang

SILOVO, Kosovo – Since its first days, the Carabinieri have developed a reputation for law enforcement excellence, battling crime and helping to improve justice where needed in Europe.

A Multinational Specialized Unit (MSU), the Italian Carabinieri are comprised of former Italian soldiers who distinguished themselves through their skills and professionalism.

In Kosovo, a detachment-sized element has proven its worth as a member of the Multi-National Brigade (East) peacekeeping force. Based in Silovo, it consists of 15 operational and staff personnel. It also includes the French Gendarmes.

All members of the MSU live and work out of two Serbian homes rented by the owner, said Chief Warrant Officer Carlos Panattoni, the detachment commander.

"We are a family and we live, eat and work together as a band of brothers," said Chief Warrant Officer Flavio Bottini, the MNB(E) liaison officer for the MSU. "Although we have a rank structure, we rely more on loyalty, respect and the positive side of being so close with one another."

The variety of tasks assigned to the MSU extend from law and order during riots to intelligence work, said Panattoni.

"You can think of us as a mix of a state trooper, FBI agent and a military policeman," Bottini said.

The Carabinieri Corps was created July 13, 1814, by resolution of King Vittorio Emanuele I. It was originally known as the Carabinieri Real. The men who served in the Carabinieri were selected among the best to provide justice and security.

In Kosovo, the Carabinieri's mission is somewhat different from its job in Italy – starting with their uniform.

"Back home we perform our jobs in civilian clothing and in most cases are undercover trying to solve crimes," Bottini said. "But being here we have to approach the situations differently."

Said Panattoni, "Our investigation skills are slightly different and we have to perform all investigations through the people to get information. The people here are the ones who talk if we can't get what we need from the municipal leaders."

Despite the language barrier, the MSU still manage to discuss issues and problems with the local citizens.

"It's because we have a history with these people and they have a tendency to tell us more because of the trust and respect they have for us," Panattoni said. "Also being a part of KFOR reassures them that if there is a problem it will be taken care of."

Panattoni's approach to ensure a successful KFOR mission has been to build on that trust. The MSU has conducted area searches, vehicle checkpoints and on occasion, high speed chases.

"When we perform vehicle checkpoints we try not to stay in one place for an extended period of time," Bottini said. "If we were to stay there for two or more hours people will start informing others of our presence, which in the long run eliminates the possibility to find something."



Chief Warrant Officer Carlos Panattoni, detachment commander of the Italian Carabinieri in Kosovo, records driver information during a routine vehicle check, Feb. 7.

They target their patrols where they think a humvee or larger vehicle couldn't get to, said Bottini.

"We go through all the narrow alleys everybody else can't," he said.

Since the members of the Carabinieri have been providing services in Kosovo, they've noticed improvement.

"I noticed a huge difference from when I was here in '99," said Appununtato (corporal) Scelto Roberto Frau, a member of the Carabinieri. "The people then were a little wild and couldn't see through their past. They would rather fight against each other than establish some kind of agreement."

"Now being my second time here, I think the overall anger in their lives is diminishing slowly and they are willing to live a normal life, which in the end is what we all want."



From left, Sgt. 1st Class Emmitt Richardson, receives pointers from Staff Sgt. Susan Keith before their first run at Brezovica ski area during a recent MWR-sponsored trip. Both soldiers are with the 101st Military Intelligence Battalion at Camp Bondsteel.

Ski trip is a powdery blast

Story and photos by Master Sgt. John Barr

BREZOVICA, Kosovo – “The snow was coming down so hard you really couldn’t tell the ground from the sky,” said 1st Lt. Peter Guellnitz, of Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 2-63 Armor Battalion, describing the ski conditions on the slopes of Sar Mountain.

A day of skiing, relaxing, or some of both was where Guellnitz and a busload of soldiers took a break from the routine of camp life near Brezovica. The village of Brezovica lies southwest of Strpce, in the Polish-Ukrainian sector of Multi-National Brigade (East). At the end of the mountain road is the Molika Hotel. It hosts a facility that was the backup site for the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo.

The hotel had a second floor café and a spacious restaurant on the lobby floor. There was a small gift and snack shop and plenty of tables and chairs to get comfortable in for letter writing, reading or looking out the windows at the downhill trails.

Outside were vendors, a snack and coffee bar and down the hill were other shops, pizzerias, and a cafe with a relaxed and friendly environment.

One need not be an Olympic class skier to have a good time. Instructors and classes were available for beginners.

Some soldiers such as Staff Sgt. Susan Keith, an intelligence specialist with 66th Military Intelligence Group, also provided instruction.

Keith gave pointers to Sgt. 1st Class Emmitt Richardson, a signal officer with Alpha Company, 101st Military Intelligence Battalion.

“My day went well,” Richardson said. “My first time skiing and my instructor was excellent. I don’t think I could

have done it without her.”

Keith praised her student’s attitude.

“He did rather well and improved by leaps and bounds each time we went up,” she said. “He was very receptive to whatever instruction I had to give. He did a really good job and kept a positive attitude.”

1st Lt. Christopher Strunk, of HHC, 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, added, “I don’t have much skiing experience but I have had a great time out here today. I did a lot of snowboarding. The big slope is pretty nice except for the darn wind today. It about blew me out of my chair when I got up there, man!”

It was the second time snowboarding for 1st Lt. Matt Terwilliger, also of HHC.

“I had a blast,” he said. “I recommend to anybody that’s been out once or twice or just never been before, to come up here and get a chance to ski or snowboard.”

The day trip, hosted by Morale, Welfare and Recreation, is offered twice a week. Soldiers are asked to sign up in advance at each base camp field house.

Adrian Jones, MWR manager at Camp Monteith, said, “The mountain there is so gorgeous! To view it alone can give the feeling of being a million miles away from the camps here in Kosovo. I also find the resort is a perfect little ski community.”

Guellnitz added, “It’s a great escape. It lets you let loose for a day. I definitely recommend it as a good one-day thing. It’s a good stress reliever, especially for a small base like Magrath. For me, it’s my second time off post since I’ve been here.”

Sports Day: Are you ready?



Capt. Terry Robinson, company commander of the 212th MPs, takes aim during a recent basketball game on Camp Bondsteel.

By Spc. Whitney Hughes

On any given day, finding soldiers competing in athletics wouldn't be hard. Some play for fun. Others play for bragging rights. But on Sports Day they will have something more to compete for – the Commander's Cup.

Sports Day will be held Feb 22. It will begin at 9:45 a.m. at the South Town Gym and last until roughly 7 p.m., when the cup is presented to the winning unit. Every unit in Multi-National Brigade (East), including multinational units, is eligible to compete.

"It (Sports Day) gives soldiers a chance to come together as a multinational brigade," said Maj. Brian Brandt, secretary to the general staff.

The Sports Day competitions will include six different events:

- **Volleyball**
- **Basketball**
- **Sandbag race**
- **Bike, run, and press**
- **10 kilometer rucksack march**
- **Tug of war**

"The competition incites the soldier's competitive drive. It gives them a chance to put their best foot forward in front of other units," said Capt. Daniel Edwan, commander of HHC, who organized the events.

Although Sports Day is a relatively new tradition, beginning with the previous rotation, the soldiers of MNB(E) are not taking it lightly.

"It's like anything else in the Army, the mission comes first and the mission is to win," said Sgt. Joshua Quinton, a paralegal NCO with the Task Force Falcon Judge Advocate General's office.

To make sure the best soldiers were chosen, some units, like HHC, handpicked their teams through tryouts, which were held Feb. 9.

HHC's basketball coach, Capt. John Sabala, said that this was the best method to see who was serious and who had ability.

Other units, like the ones of 2-2 Infantry Battalion, competed against each for the right to compete in Sports Day, Edwan said.

For some units, the selection was a challenge. The 793rd Military Police Battalion took an even number of soldiers from each of its companies because they are located at different camps, said Sgt. 1st Class Gilbert Doplemore, operations sergeant for the 212th Military Police Company.

Whichever way the teams were chosen, it just added more fuel to the competitive spirit of the soldiers, Edwan said.

And competition is what Sports Day is all about.

Peacekeeper profile



Ryan Ferre

Age: 20

Rank: Pfc.

MOS: 11B, infantryman

Unit: 82nd Eng. Bn.

Camp: Bondsteel

Hometown: Berlin, Pa.

Why did you join the Army? To see the world and the adventure of it.

What advice would you give to soldiers coming into Kosovo?
Call your mom.

Lagunari bolster Rapid Guardian with elite troops

Story and photos by Spc. Catherine Caruso

BILINCI, Kosovo- The Lagunari's patch told their entire story, if you knew how to read it.

The winged lion of San Marco holds a sword in one paw, a book in the other. According to legend, when the sword is lowered and the book is opened, the Lagunari's home in Venice is at peace, said Sergeant Jacopo Bettio. When the book is closed and the sword is raised, the city is at war.

But the Lagunari, an elite unit of the Italian Army, is always ready for war.

"The first thing you need to know is we are Italian Army. Second, we are a NATO ally, and third, we are Lagunari," explained Caporale Maggiore Diego Chavez.

The Lagunari are marine experts on amphibious assaults, infiltration, and reconnaissance. During an interview earlier this month, Chavez spoke on behalf of the platoon, condensing everyone's answers into a single voice.

They pride themselves on being soldiers before everything, he said. They are here to complete their missions to standard. So what each mission happens to be is irrelevant.

In other words, the fact that their platoon had just returned from a search, which uncovered three automatic weapons, ammunition, and several magazines, wasn't a big deal.

"It's normal for us," said Corporale Maggiore Pietro Carlo, who discovered two of the weapons. "It's routine. We've found weapons before. If we find a weapon, that's good. If we don't find a weapon, that's better."

The Lagunari were in Bilinci for Rapid Guardian 03-1, an exercise designed to demonstrate the interoperability of KFOR's multinational brigades, and its ability to rapidly deploy forces throughout the province.

As part of the Spanish Coy or Company, the

Lagunari augmented a group of Spanish mountaineers and for two weeks monitored a Multi-National Brigade (East) sector normally covered by the 2-2 Infantry Battalion.

"We are not here to prove we are better than anybody else," Diego said. "We are not here to show off. We want to be known for our mission – what we do."

While the mountaineers patrolled the hills above the town, the Lagunari searched buildings in the valley below.

Bilinci is a community on the border of the Administrative Boundary Line. It was once a multiethnic community, but now the approximately dozen Serb homes interspersed throughout the predominately Albanian town stand abandoned, a resident told the Lagunari troops.

Caporal Maggiore Carlo Piras uncovered a pair of automatic weapons in a barn. Then Sergeant Alessandro



Vicente found a magazine of ammunition in the hay.

A Bilinci resident had initially claimed the crumbling building as part of his property, then recanted when the weapons were found. The barn was on land abandoned by another family during the war, he said.

In a garage, another weapon was found inside a car. A search of the owner's home yielded more magazines, and a handful of bullets was found on a rafter in his barn.

Platoon Chief Marciello Marcello Lupoli said while Bilinci's residents still fear a Yugoslav military offensive across the ABL, his platoon's job was to protect everyone.

"The people of Bilinci understand we are

here for the safety and security of both groups, K-Albanian and K-Serb," he said.

While United Nations and KFOR officials have stressed the way to achieve safety and security in the region is to respect municipal authority and the rule of law, "they still have

bad memories of the war," Lupoli said.

According to Bettio, there was another piece to the story of the lion of San Marco. In the legend, the profile of the lion was visible in the shoreline of the Balkan Peninsula, across the Adriatic Sea from the Lagunari's home station in Venice.

For the Lagunari, the lion is always ready for battle. But for today, the Lagunari's mission was to reach across the sea and help bring peace.

"It's routine. We've found weapons before. If we find a weapon, that's good. If we don't find a weapon, that's better."

Corporale Maggiore Pietro Carlo



Sergente Alessandro Vicente clears an automatic rifle found during a search of an abandoned barn, Feb. 5. On preceding page, Platoon Chief Marciello Marcello Lupoli patrols in Bilinci.

Up, up and away

The 201st sling loads for multinationals

Story and photos by Spc. Matthew Lang

The air was brisk, thin layers of ice covered the tarmac and light snowfall added to a somewhat quiet day on Camp Bondsteel.

Suddenly, a UH-60 Black Hawk stormed in and a multinational soldier from the crowd yelled, "Wow, did you see that? It just picked up that humvee with ease!"

The 201st Logistics Task Force demonstrated its capabilities for multinational personnel from around KFOR on Feb. 10. For a half hour, the 201st managed to showcase its capabilities at the Supply Support Activity pad in South town.

The purpose of the demonstration was to provide educational information and display the current capabilities of the 201st to various multinational leaders of KFOR.

"It lets them feel reassured that if something goes wrong we can help," said 1st Lt. Jeffrey Lundin, the maintenance control officer for the 201st.

"All this promotes a great opportunity to show everyone what they can do."

Lt. Col. Jean-Pierre Pakula, chief of the Joint Logistic Coordination Cell for the French Army.

One of the most captivating maneuvers, by the reaction of the crowd, was the sling load operation.

"Everyone's favorite part is the sling load," said 1st Lt. Erin K. McGill, executive officer for Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 201st. "We all take turns as to who gets to do it next because of thrill of being under the trust of a helicopter and being able to say that you accomplished that."

Seeing a humvee lifted into the sky is pretty cool too, McGill added.

Following the sling load, the 201st demonstrated 9-line medevac procedures.

The event was complimented with static displays of the many vehicles used by logistics for recovery operations.

Staff Sgt. Billy Moore, a medic with the 201st, said that his favorite part of the static display was explaining the capabilities of the M997 ambulance.

Pfc. Danara Edwards, a medic with the 201st, added that she enjoyed talking about her job.

"All this promotes a great opportunity to show everyone what they can do," said Lt. Col. Jean-Pierre Pakula, chief of the Joint Logistic Coordination Cell for the French Army. "If something should go wrong, they will know who can help."

Beyond the familiarization, McGill said it was a great way for his soldiers to meet their multinational counterparts.

"This gives us further appreciation of us being one team here in Kosovo," he said.

**A Black Hawk lifts a humvee
the Supply Support Activity**





free into the sky during a sling load operation at
ty pad, Feb.11.



Zegra, Rock, Power retired

OP closures signify progress in MNB(E)

Story and photos by Spc. Matthew Lang

OBSERVATION POSTS POWER, ZEGRA, ROCK -- As our presence in Kosovo continues, citizens throughout the province continue to show it's possible that one day they won't need KFOR.

The closing of Observation Posts Zegra, Rock, and Power in the Multi-National Brigade (East) sector confirms the overall safe and secure environment in Kosovo is improving, according to MNB(E) leadership.

These OPs have been recognized as the workhorses of MNB(E). Since their establishment in 1999, soldiers stationed at the OPs have managed to overcome enemy fire, intercept numerous smuggling attempts and quell ethnic tensions within the surrounding communities.

At the start of the KFOR mission, the OPs consisted of a few tents and concertina wire. Each year they were improved.

"The closing of the OPs makes me feel really good," said

Sgt. William Smith, the senior medic with Alpha Company, 2-2 Infantry Battalion at OP Power. "I was here in '99 and the outposts were not quite as nice. Instead, we lived and worked out of a few GP mediums (tents)."

"It also makes me feel good to see that we are leading them back into an ordinary life so that they can hopefully make peace again," added Smith.

Kosovo has improved, Smith said. Incidents that threaten a safe and secure environment have dropped dramatically since the first year of KFOR's presence.

"People are getting along better," he said.

Capt. Erik Krivda, commander of Charlie Company, 2-2 Inf. at OP Zegra said, "The environment itself has become a safe and secure area and has allowed us to start patrolling from Camp Monteith."

Krivda added that just because soldiers will no longer live



An aerial view of Observation Post Zegra.



An ambulance departs Observation Post Power, Jan. 31, marking the last vehicle to leave the OP before the gate is closed a final time.

next door, it should not change the atmosphere of the area.

"Soldiers got along better and there was a lot of camaraderie here which is something you don't get back at Monteith or Bondsteel," Krivda said. "Everybody goes their separate ways and hides out at the cappuccino bar or Burger King instead of just sitting down as a team and working together."

"I have mixed feelings about it," said Staff Sgt. Todd Ferguson, a platoon sergeant with Company C. "I'm glad that higher up feels that the area is stable and secure and that our presence isn't required 24-7 anymore. But it's kind of sad because we made this our home. We were enjoying ourselves. The unit itself worked a little bit more independently."

Not everyone was happy with the closing of the posts, but they were willing to move on.

"Life at Zegra was great," said Cpl. Jesse Hubbert, an infantryman with Company C. "It allowed us to do our own thing as a company and it's a better staging point, because it's closer to our sector than Camp Monteith."

"I think it's a signal to Kosovo that the Americans are not going to be here forever," Hubbert added.

Even with the OPs closing, it has been business as usual. Soldiers managed to pack and move their belongings to Camp Monteith while maintaining their primary mission, said Krivda.

In the following weeks, the OPs will be guarded and maintained while Brown and Root starts to disassemble them. Some will be removed completely, while others will only be slightly changed.

OP Zegra will be returned to its original state — farmland, Krivda said. Brown and Root will take everything down and

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bulldoze the land into a field sometime this year.

"These people finally realized that they can't go on fighting all the time because they're going to have the rest of the world getting involved," said Hubbert.

They closed it down for one reason; to give more control to local authorities, said Smith. The Kosovo Police Service has taken a share of the load off American troops.

"Let them take over the responsibilities so that some day we can eventually pull out fully," Ferguson said.

Peacekeeper profile



Adrian Robicheaux

Age: 29

Rank: Sgt.

MOS: Supply Sergeant

Unit: HHC, 3rd Brigade

Camp: Bondsteel

Hometown: Houston, Texas

Why did you join the Army? To see and learn new things.

What advice would you give to soldiers coming to Kosovo?

Just relax and take things one day at a time and remember why you are here.

Battle Co. excels as quick reaction force

By Spc. Catherine Caruso

TRSTINA, Kosovo- Battle Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne) was under attack. "That's the forward observer," said 1st Sgt. Richard Weik, pointing to Fitore Shkodra. "Every time I'm here, she's in front."

Shkodra, 12 years old and about four feet tall, smiled sweetly, and said "please" and "thank you" politely. And when she finished with the paratroopers at this remote mountain village checkpoint, there was little left of the soldiers' MREs, pin-on rank, and especially their writing implements. Pens are a hot item among Kosovo youth.

Battle Company's paratroopers did well not to underestimate her determination, much less her powers of persuasion.

These were the same paratroopers who ushered in Rapid Guardian 03-1, an international exercise designed to display NATO's readiness and willingness to rapidly deploy large forces to the region, by parachuting into Krusevo airfield on Jan. 15.

With that jump, the newly-activated Battle Company embarked on its first real world mission, one that was a bit of a departure from their usual field problems.

Last May, Battle Company was barely more than a concept, a green unit filled with raw recruits in a brigade that had been inactive since shortly after the Vietnam War.

"I had one specialist, everyone else below E5 was straight out of basic training," said Executive Officer 2nd Lt. Robert Likens.

Since then, the Army has poured onto them as much training as they can absorb, as fast as they can absorb.

"The training tempo and the training intensity is — it's nothing like I've ever seen," said Likens. "I've never seen a unit train this long and with this intensity."

Perhaps the training tempo is not surprising, since their fledgling battalion is tasked to respond to a wide range of short notice deployments and contingency operations from their southern European forward operating position, from civilian evacuations to their participation in NATO's KFOR Quick Reaction Force. But their exceptionally high morale, particularly under the constant stress of field exercises, is a credit to the unit and its NCOs, Likens said.

As the most recent heirs to a historic battalion boasting a distinguished tradition from the Vietnam War, these paratroopers have been eager to prove themselves here.

Patrolling the remote mountain country within a few hundred meters of the Administrative Boundary Line, Battle Company and a Spanish Army Company attached to their battalion have stopped two ABL border violations and unearthed a cache of machine gun ammunition.

"We have some pretty big footsteps to follow," said Pfc. Phillip Russell, an infantryman in Battle Company. "But we're anxious to try."

Still, it was places like this quiet checkpoint in Trstina, where Battle Company's position had been overrun by schoolchildren waiting for afternoon classes to begin, that opened their eyes to a bigger picture only touched on in their field manuals.

"We went up to the school the other day, and they wondered how long we'd be around," Russell said. Given the predominantly Kosovo-Albanian town's proximity to the ABL, they wondered if the increased peacekeeper presence meant something was in the works. "They're mostly worried things

will fire back up again."

"It's pretty amazing, the things we take for granted. Like our education, and then you come here and these kids are begging for pens," Russell added. Further up the road, at a forward position, more paratroopers were hunkered down in new fresh-from-the box cold weather tents. They were on a break between patrols.

They talked of the things they have seen- ruined buildings, curious children, civilians who approach the camp with thanks for their presence or hot food to help them stay warm at night.

"The kids, their families, everyone is very friendly," said Pfc. Andrew Peddycord. "It's nice to get out (of the field), and see different cultures."

But here, outside the sterile environment of the training areas, high in Kosovo's hills, were the reasons why they train — the people.

And so, some of the most heavily trained fighting paratroopers in the U.S. Army were being introduced to the practical applications of their trade by keeping the peace at an intersection full of excited schoolchildren.

Fortunately, much like a field problem, a paratrooper worth his wings could devise a solution.

In this case, Russell recruited an ally.

"My protector," Russell said, pointing to 11-year-old Halil Shkodra. "He tells the other kids when I have Pepsi or something (to give away), and makes sure they leave me alone when I have to work."



Photo by Spc. Matthew Lang

From left, 1st Sgt. Richard Weik and Capt. George Shabbhear, both of Battle Co., walk up a steep, snowy path along the ABL, Feb. 24.

2-63 patrol maintains steady presence

By Spc. Christopher Gookin

VITINA, Kosovo—It was an overcast Friday morning and a steady breeze put an extra chill in the air. The streets of Vitina were crowded with children making their way to school. When the humvees drove by, they stopped and waved.

"We'll be mounted for the first part of this patrol," said 1st Lt. Dean Morrison, of 3rd Platoon, Alpha Company, 2-63 Armor Battalion.

The presence patrol continued through Vitina where neighbors were separated by acres of land. A flock of sheep grazed under electrical wires and the watchful eye of a shepherd and his dog.

The road through the village of Ljubiste was narrow and showed signs of the heavy run-off of melting snow. It wound further into the foothills where beams of sunlight reflected off the top of a minaret. The village was quiet.

As the patrol continued on, it was apparent this would be another routine day for Company A, and another safe and secure day in this section of Multi-National Brigade (East). Heading towards Binac, the humvees entered a small compound with a small schoolhouse in the corner. Nearby, another was under construction.

The old school was small with tight hallways and narrow doorways. The new school featured new water and septic lines. The pink stucco walls stood in stark contrast to the dark rocks scattered behind the compound.

"We'll stop here and see how things are at the school," said Morrison. "This is the only integrated school in the municipality but the Albanian and Serbian kids are in different classrooms."

The principal, Nikkol Simini, showed Morrison and his interpreter into a warm and compact room heated with a small stove.

While stoking the fire, Simini thanked Morrison for his visit.

Morrison posed a series of questions to Simini through an interpreter. One of the most important questions was the status of the new school.

Although the water and sewage lines had been installed, the electricity still had not been connected, Simini said. This was despite an Italian non-governmental organization (NGO) having already paid for the installation of services.

Simini asked if Morrison would speak to the Kosovo Electric Company.

"I'll speak with civil affairs and check with the municipality on the status of the electricity, but I can't speak to KEC directly," Morrison said.

"Thank you," Simini said. "Anything you can do is helpful."

The patrol returned to its humvees and proceeded back into the main section of Binac to set up a vehicle checkpoint. The vehicle checkpoint is a routine component of the patrol. Vehicles are searched for contraband, and licenses and



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dan Landry

Staff Sgt. Christopher Smith, an NCOIC with Company A, 2-63, talks to a local citizen during a routine vehicle check in the village of Binac, Jan.24.

registrations are verified.

It was also a chance for the soldiers to stretch and comment on their mission in Kosovo.

"There is poverty back home," said Pfc. Chris Holder, as he motioned for a vehicle to slow down. "But here these people don't have anything. It makes me appreciate what we have."

As he completed inspecting a work van, Sgt. Patrick Tate added, "My experience in Kosovo has definitely taught me the need to be able to work with different types of people." It's a lesson the people of Kosovo have been trying to embrace.

Valentine Messages

From the heart



**Spc. Jason Cobbs
HHC, 3rd Brigade**

**Happy Valentine's Day! We
love you, miss you, and think
of you everyday!**

**Love,
Tami and Jada**



*Capt. Daniel Edwan
HHC, 3rd Brigade*

*Hey Dan, Alex and I miss you so much! I
will talk to you when I have a chance VTC
again. Happy Valentine's Day! I love you
and take care!*

Chong and Alex



**Capt. Shane Sims
HHC, 3rd Brigade**

**And now these three remain:
faith, hope and love.
But the greatest of these is love.
1 Corinthians 13:13**

**Always,
Rach**



Maj. Caesar D. Cobb
HHC, 3rd Brigade

Dear Caesar,

**The boys and I miss you dearly.
Happy Valentine's Day and know
that we keep you close in our
hearts and spirit.**

**Love You,
Nina, Caesar II, Daniel and David
P.S. Thanks for the nice
Christmas gifts!**



Capt. William Keating
HHC, 3rd Brigade

**Your Sweetheart Forever!
Happy Vanetine's Day**



Lt. Col. David Batchelor
HHC, 3rd Brigade

***Babe, Happy Valentine's Day! I
love you! Today and Always!***

Carol

1st Lt. Brandon Halsey
101st Military Intelligence Battalion

***We love and miss you! Happy
Valentine's Day! Hug and kisses***

The Family





*Pfc. Barry Hancock
101st Military Intelligence*

*Happy Valentine's Day! We love and
miss you and can't wait to see you.
Hope you have a Happy Valentine's.*

*Love,
Amanda, Cameron & Gabe*



**Sgt. Maj. Mark Braatz
HHC, 3rd Brigade**

**Honey, I am very blessed that
You are My Valentine, I love
you with all my heart!**

**Your wife,
Brenda**



**Maj. William Clark
HHC, 3rd Brigade**

**You are always my Valentine!
Not just in February!**

**Love Ya,
A**



*Sgt. 1st Class Charles Hubbard
101st Military Intelligence Battalion*

*Daddy,
We love and miss you! We hope
you come home soon!*

*Love Love,
Janina and Shea*



*Staff Sgt. Daniel Kilgore
101st Military Intelligence Battalion*

*On this Valentine's Day we want to tell you
that we love you! We miss your smile and
laughter, but most of all we miss you. You are
in every very beat of our hearts.*

*Love,
Shelly, Brit and Ericka*



**Spc. Edward Glassford
101st Military Intelligence Battalion**

**Ich Leibe Dich und
vermisse Dich, Jn**

**Love,
Doreen**

**Capt. John Sabala
HHC, 3rd Brigade**



**John, you are my
life, and my sole
inspiration for
everything I do.
Because of you,
my heart sings
notes I never knew I had. I
know Valentine's Day will be
difficult, being apart yet again.
But always remember, you're
still here. In my heart, and
everytime I look in our girls'
eyes. I can see you, and I can
feel you in my soul.**

**All my love, All my life,
Trish**



*Sgt. Edmond Proulx
101st Military Intelligence Battalion*

*Happy Valentine's Day! Lots
of Love, Judi and Eddie.*



Capt. Todd Messinger
HHC, 3rd Brigade

Daddy,

I miss you very much. You should see how much I've grown. Mommy is teaching me a lot. And it won't be long before I'm walking. I can't wait until you come back so we can watch baseball together. I love you Dada!

**Wet kisses,
Colby Joseph**



*Capt. Thomas Saltysiak
101st Military Intelligence Battalion
Happy Valentine's Day, Daddy.
We miss you!
Love,
Jess and Pax*

Capt. Patric Nichols
HHC, 3rd Brigade



*Spc. Taurus Livingston
101st Military Intelligence Battalion
Sharone, you are the only one. My one and only love. Thank you for being my lover, my destiny and my best friend. I love you unconditionally!
Love Always,
Tiffani*

Crested Lark thrives on Bondsteel



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dan Landry

The Crested Lark is one of the few signs of wildlife found on Camp Bondsteel.

By 1st Lt. Leif Ibsen
MEDLOG OIC, Task Force Med Falcon

Editors note: 1st Lt. Ibsen discovered the hobby of bird watching by default. He was a wildlife biology major in college.

You can spot them loitering around the dining facility dumpsters or huddled against a cold wind along the crawl space of your SEA hut.

They easily blend into our gravel yards.

That "pointy headed bird," as soldiers have dubbed it, is a Crested Lark or *Galeridæ cristata*. Despite its less than glamorous habits, the small brown and white bird with the long feathers on top of its head is revered in this part of the world. It has graced the stamps of countries like Guinea, Saudi Arabia, Uganda and Jordan.

The Crested Lark could be compared behaviorally to the Rock Dove, often called a pigeon, which is found in many of the cities in the United States. This species of Lark thrives in areas with human contact and can be seen all over Camp Bondsteel walking around looking for a quick meal. They will let you get close, but not too close. If a person were patient enough they may be able to actually get the lark to eat out of their hand. They are wild animals however, so it would not be an easy task to accomplish.

If you plan on looking for this bird in the states don't waste your time. It would take a gale force wind to blow the Crested Lark that far off its flight paths. The Crested Lark is a native bird in the European regions and can be found as far north as Finland.

The coloring of the crested lark is determined by the area where it resides.

Remember the next time you are out strolling around on Camp Bondsteel and you see the "pointy-headed bird," that it is actually a Crested Lark. For those personnel returning to Germany you can impress your peers with this new found knowledge you have gained during your deployment to Kosovo.

Tough Book continued from page 2

TOCs, is understandably frustrated with limitations in "parsing (automatically sorting) reports" and the challenges faced when "too many messages" are coming in.

But even he admits to the numerous possibilities for an all encompassing "single, local records database" to aid intelligence analysis in the SASO environment we are operating in. While frustrating at times, all these challenges reflect the reality of fielding new computer systems and software in a world where advances in technology happen vernight: waiting too long means that a product has already become obsolete.

This rotation is an unparalleled opportunity for our soldiers to work with a prototype with limitless potential and, more importantly, directly influence its development and doctrine for the rest of the Army. Simply put, there is no other brigade in the Army that has made similar advances with the "SASO Toolset" software for the ASAS-L; nor is there any other brigade which has the unique opportunity to test the system's limits every day in the environment it was designed for. So for the intelligence community of MNB(E) this is an exciting time: each lesson learned moves us one step closer to "intel fusion"; each challenge met moves us one step closer to our "intel future."

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For additional news

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- Carabinieri help local town with donations.
- U.N. Administrator retires.
- Chief of Mission visits American troops.

Also check out the Photo of the Day, and see what soldiers of MNB(E) are accomplishing daily.

Scenes of Kosovo



An orthodox church in Partes.
Photo by Spc. Matthew Lang